

Directory of Estuarine and Nearshore Marine Habitat Assessment Projects in Puget Sound

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This document transmits a directory and limited analysis of 51 estuarine and nearshore marine habitat assessment projects for all or part of Puget Sound. Puget Sound Water Quality Action Team (PSAT) staff prepared this material in an effort to improve the coordination of the numerous activities being undertaken around the region (including Hood Canal and the straits of Juan de Fuca and Georgia). We are distributing this initial (incomplete) version of the directory in hope that the compiled information and the limited analyses will encourage interaction among various efforts and identify opportunities for aligning projects. Two specific uses we envision for the directory include:

- Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) staff might review and analyze the compiled information to help them understand the context of projects proposed for SRFB funding and to guide the Board's funding toward the assessment projects most critical for salmon recovery efforts.
- Similarly, we intend that the compiled information about ongoing efforts will help the Army Corps of Engineers and its local partners to define and scope their "general investigation" of Puget Sound nearshore habitats.

In addition, PSAT staff will use the compiled information to plan our approach to developing and implementing an Estuarine Health Indicator for Washington's marine waters (part of the Salmon Recovery Scorecard) and to clarify relationships among the various assessment and evaluation efforts and the monitoring studies of the Puget Sound Ambient Monitoring Program (PSAMP).

PSAT staff have not yet committed to maintaining and updating the information used to produce the directory. Nor have we committed to performing additional analyses of the information in the directory or to performing any specific follow up tasks (e.g., coordinating the various activities that are asserting criteria for ranking restoration projects). Decisions about these or other next steps for PSAT staff will depend on what we hear about the usefulness of the directory and the apparent needs for additional analysis and/or coordination of assessment efforts.

Please contact us (Scott at 360-407-7315 or sredman@psat.wa.gov; Jo at 360-407-7337 or jhenry@psat.wa.gov) to convey your feedback about the directory (e.g., corrections to entries, suggestions for additional entries) or if you have suggestions for next steps for PSAT staff's work.

Directory of Estuarine and Nearshore Marine Habitat Assessments

The attached directory lists 50 projects but provides meaningful information about only 47 of these. Projects are categorized by the “project types” listed in the table below.

Project Type	Project Objectives Include:
A	Inventing or <u>developing indicators or other characterizations</u> of current and/or historic estuarine or nearshore marine <u>habitat conditions</u> (n=41)
B	<u>Collecting and/or compiling data</u> on estuarine or nearshore marine habitats (n=44)
C	<u>Assembling geographic information systems (GIS)</u> with estuarine or nearshore marine habitat data (n=36)
D	<u>Describing properly functioning conditions</u> of estuarine or nearshore marine habitats (n=9)
E	Asserting <u>criteria for ranking</u> estuarine or nearshore marine <u>restoration projects</u> (n=16)
F	Developing <u>protocols</u> for data collection, analysis, and/or manipulation (n=16)
G	Performing <u>other scientific analyses</u> of estuarine or nearshore marine habitats with implications for conservation and recovery of salmon and other species (n=28)

Information in the directory was provided by project proponents in response to an e-mail questionnaire that we sent out in March 2001. In some cases we developed the project descriptions for the directory based on our understanding of a project. We generally did not edit the information provided by project proponents but we did edit the “project type” information in an attempt to ensure some consistency in how the types are defined. Project proponents may not agree with our assessment of the type of project that they are conducting. (Project type – using the 7 categories in the table above – for each entry in the directory is shown by a series of check boxes.)

We identified an additional 33 projects for possible inclusion in the directory. We were not able to gather the necessary information on these for this version of the directory. A list of these projects is provided. Please keep these projects in mind as you review the directory and the analyses below.

Our contact information for the projects included in the directory and those that we were not able to include is provided as a separate file. In some cases, contact information is provided in the directory entry. If it is not, you should find phone numbers and/or e-mail addresses in the attached contact list.

The information for the directory is in a Microsoft Access database. Please contact us if you would like to obtain an electronic copy of the directory information (i.e., to facilitate searches and/or analyses).

Initial Analyses of the Projects in the Directory

We have not been able to spend much time to review and analyze the information we have compiled. The paragraphs below provide summary analyses of the projects in the directory that are identified as describing properly functioning conditions of estuarine or nearshore marine habitats and those that are identified as asserting criteria for ranking estuarine or nearshore marine restoration projects.

Projects Defining Properly Functioning Conditions. Nine of the 47 projects are attempting to “describe properly functioning condition of estuarine or nearshore marine habitat conditions.” One project has the sole objective of defining properly functioning conditions. The other eight projects will define properly functioning conditions and apply these definitions to rate current conditions. Of these eight, only one is applicable Soundwide. The remaining seven are rating conditions in specific locations, though their approach may be applicable Soundwide. The geographic locations addressed by these seven projects include:

- Bainbridge Island
- Oakland Bay & Hammersley Inlet
- Sinclair and Dyes Inlets
- Cherry Point
- Hood Canal and eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca
- Skagit Bay
- Snohomish Estuary

Projects Identifying and Ranking Restoration Projects. Sixteen of the 47 projects described in the directory are asserting criteria (or otherwise supporting efforts) to identify and rank estuarine and nearshore marine restoration projects. Eleven of these 16 projects are targeted to local areas within Puget Sound. The other five projects cover larger geographic areas or are less focused on this task.

The specific areas covered by the 11 “local” projects include:

- Kitsap County – four projects, including the East Kitsap Strategy for Salmon Recovery, the Kitsap Refugia study, the Bainbridge Island Nearshore Assessment, and a U.S. Navy project to protect and improve conditions in Sinclair and Dyes inlets;
- Island County – three projects, including assessment of forage fish spawning areas, shoreline hardening and eelgrass beds;
- Skagit County – includes MRC-led assessment of potential locations for MPAs for bottom fish protection and People for Puget Sound’s assessment of Skagit Estuary restoration opportunities;
- Mason County – SRFB-funded project to identify restoration and preservation opportunities in Oakland Bay and Hammersly Inlet;
- Snohomish County – development of the “Salmon Overlay,” a blueprint for salmon recovery in the Snohomish Estuary.

[A cursory review of the directory reveals that a few other projects (e.g., the SRFB-funded nearshore habitat assessment project in Pierce County and King County’s state of the nearshore project) appear to be linked to efforts to identify and rank potential restoration projects.]

The only larger-scale efforts to identify and rank restoration opportunities (if not specific projects) appear to be the Nearshore Habitat Assessment project of the Northwest Straits Commission (seven northern counties of the greater Puget Sound region) and the Army Corps' proposed general investigation of Puget Sound nearshore environments.

The three additional efforts that are identified as “asserting criteria ... to rank ... restoration projects”, are actually a bit more limited in their scope as they develop, present and interpret data that might be used in others' efforts to identify and rank restoration projects.